

**Amendments to the claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for packaging a product arranged in a tray wherein a an upper film located in a distance above the product is clamped along an edge surrounding the tray and thereafter is ~~deformed~~ stretched in a direction extending away from the product and wherein subsequently the tray is raised relative to the upper film and then the edge of the tray and the upper film are sealed.

2. (Original) A method for packaging a product arranged in a tray according to claim 1, wherein the space surrounding the product is evacuated before sealing.

3. (Original) A method for packaging a product arranged in a tray according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the space surrounding the product is filled with a gas before sealing.

4. (Currently Amended) A packaging machine for packaging a product, comprising:

a sealing station with a chamber defining an internal space and comprising an upper tool with a sealing tool and a lower tool which are movable relative to each other into an opened and into a closed position;

a tray which is insertable into the internal space when in the opened position;

a device for supplying an upper film into the interior space of the chamber;

a drive mechanism for the relative movement of the upper and the lower tool and for the sealing tool; and

a control for controlling the drive mechanism which is formed such that the chamber is closed after the supply of the tray to thereby firmly clamp the upper film along an edge surrounding an edge of the tray, thereafter the upper film is stretched in a direction away from the

product, then the tray is raised towards the upper film, and subsequently sealed thereto.

5. (Original) A packaging machine according to claim 4, wherein the control is formed such that an evacuating of the space surrounding the product and if necessary, a supplying of gas into this space is performed before the sealing.

6. (Currently Amended) A packaging machine ~~comprising~~ according to claim 4 with:

~~a sealing station having an interior of a chamber and comprising an upper tool and a lower tool which are movable relative to each other;~~  
a device for accommodating a tray in the interior of the chamber; and  
~~a device for supplying an upper film into the interior of the chamber;~~  
wherein the device for accommodating the tray is bi-directionally movable between a first position in which the tray has a maximum distance to the plane of the upper film and a second position in which the tray has a minimum distance to this plane.

7. (Original) A packaging machine according to claim 6, wherein the upper tool comprises a forming tool with a recess facing the lower tool.

8. (Original) A packaging machine according to claim 6 or 7, comprising:  
a tray carrier insertable into the sealing station for sealing of a package is provided having a frame which is supported between the upper and the lower tool, when the sealing station is closed, and a carrying part;  
and wherein the carrying part is bi-directionally movable for performing the variation of the distance.